Nation

Volume 22, No. 03 • December 12, 2014

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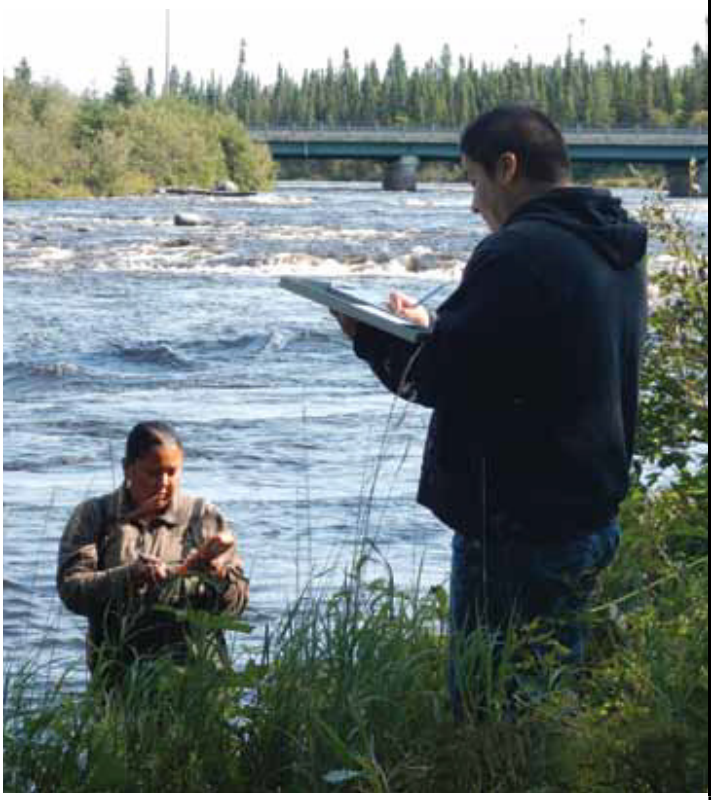

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Glass Houses

by Will Nicholls

Hard times are ahead for over 80 First Nation bands that haven't handed over their financial records under Canada's First Nations Financial Transparency Act. If documents aren't received by December 12, Ottawa says federal funding will be cut off.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) issued an ultimatum, threatening to take action if the required financial documents weren't received by November 26, 2014. Steps could include a plan on how the holdout bands would provide the financial statements as soon as possible. If this isn't done the AANDC could withhold funding for non-essential programs, services and activities.

Even scarier is that AANDC is waving the possibility of withholding funds for essential programs or even terminating funding agreements by December 12. The AANDC have also said they might publish the names of non-compliant First Nations bands on the web and inform other federal departments who provide funding to the bands. Court action is also being considered.

A major problem many of those bands have is that the Act calls for them to disclose financial information from their economic ventures. It raises the question of why this is being required. How many businesses in Canada would do this? It would interfere with their ability to make money. I would love financial information on my competition. Many of the bands believe, and rightly so, that this information should be available to only band members and not the general public.

AANDC Minister Bernard Valcourt says the disclosure laws under the Act were put in place to ensure band members have access to all financial information about their respective bands.

Yet, while the feds are calling for financial management, transparency and accountability on the part of First Nations, they themselves don't respect those same standards. New information on AANDC financial practices show the department has taken $500 million in the past six years from infrastructure programs to cover budget shortfalls elsewhere.

Chief Franklin Paibomsai of the Whitefish River First Nation in northern Ontario, said First Nations communities are feeling the impacts. Two hot infrastructure issues – schools and safe drinking water – are affected by these decisions, he said. Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett said the document shows First Nations communities are not getting the funding they need. "Mr. Harper's government can no longer hide their severe and chronic underfunding of critical needs like housing, clean water and education on reserve," she stated.

The document itself says shifting infrastructure money elsewhere results in an "inability to provide provincial-like services on reserve." The feds have admitted they don't have a clue on how AANDC's spending compares to provincial spending for the rest of Canada.

Given how many First Nations are under third-party management for mismanaging their financial budgets by AANDC, perhaps it is time to put them under third-party management themselves? After all there is some story about glass houses and a few stones.

Contents

editorial
- Glass Houses 3

rez notes
- Keeping the fire burning 4

news
- Meechum's annual fundraiser 5
- Nakuset Woman of the Year 7

features
- Joshua Iserhoff walks the talk 12
- Quebec-Cree Plan Nord collaboration 17
- Tim Whiskeychan's $5 coin 21
- Suicide conference 25
- Behind the scenes of Mohawk Girls 29
- Cree firefighters 33
- Holiday entertaining 34
- Your health on the road 47

UTNS
- Better days ahead 50

Keeping the fire burning

by Joshua Iserhoff

I am sitting in a warm cabin just beside Pikauba River, in the land of Innu. Words cannot describe how these past few days have been. We have trekked many miles and have seen the breadth of the land from Mistissini to here.

We may have tasted possibly all seasons since our departure. From November rain, mild spring weather, winter's bone chill to harsh smells in the camper, eek! I've already told the walkers that I already miss them. Rebecca and Travis Blacksmith (our driver and cooks) have participated in cultural expeditions before and explained that people create a strong bond when travelling together for weeks at a time.

What I was feeling was advance separation anxiety. I take it all in. I savour every story and bout of laughter. Johnny Coonishish and I trekked big hills and through it all I was laughing. At times, his heartfelt stories made my heart understand the art of human connection. Everyone has a story and I've learned to listen to each word and never to think of your answer while someone shares a story. Listening is an art!

This #standagainsturanium walk has been an incredible experience. I was to walk only for a few days but discovered a couple hours after we set off that I couldn't stop now, that I must go and bring the important message that the Eeyouch do not want uranium mining and development within Eeyou Istchee.

I speak for most of the walkers when I say that the message is simple: "We do not want our waters and land to be contaminated." Many of us know that water gives life and is essential to live. A good communication strategist friend of mine told me that people don't care about cultures and how people live but one thing they will care about is water – we all want good drinking water! I learned about this in the media. Whenever I mentioned not wanting our waters to be contaminated most of them connected with me. I like an outsider's perspective!

Every day I have wonderful and incredible revelations. Our Elders have told me a few times that spending time out on the land clears your mind and replenishes your thoughts. I must say that this method does the mind and body good.

I have to commend our #standagainsturanium walkers. They are heroes in my book. They are: our young Elder Clifford "Waptum" Jolly, Jessie Mettaweskum, Daisy Wapachee, Marilee Neeposh, Kay Lynn Nayassit, Darren Loon, Johnny, Willie and William Coonishish, Nicholas Wapachee and our dears who joined along the way, Eva Ottawa, and our French garçons Fred and Emmanuel from Montreal. A shout-out to Amy Linton for all help and for firing up this walk! To the great communications team: Christian and Arielle! It was teamwork and mutual respect that has kept us going this far. Our daily morning prayer surely had everything to do with it.

It is my prayer that when I present to the BAPE hearings at Montreal along with our walkers that they will know that our waters and land are sacred and that this walk is for our people and for future generations.

I'm the fire keeper tonight so I'll sign off now and keep the fire burning!

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Giving back at Christmas

Meechum's annual fundraiser spreads the holiday spirit in Mistissini

by Joel Barde

Christmas brings families together throughout Eeyou Istchee. For most, a turkey dinner with all the fixing and gifts under the tree are an integral part of the holiday.

Yet for a small minority, those things are out of reach. Putting any food on the table and paying the bills takes precedent over expensive feasts and presents.

That's where Cree communities are banding together and stepping in, ensuring the less fortunate amongst them are able to have a good meal and provide toys to their children.

Meechum's, a grocery store in Mistissini, has been home-base for a food drive and gift exchange for over 10 years.

Beverly Quinn, an owner of the grocery store, says she is consistently impressed with how the community supports its fundraising efforts.

"It's something we've done for so long in this community. It's consistent. As soon as they know we're decorating, they know that we're going to be preparing the angel tree."

The Wreath of Hope was developed by Quinn, her husband and two other women from the Cree Health Board.

The concept is simple. A large wreath is displayed in the store, adorned with candles. And the more people donate, the more candles get lit. The amount raised is displayed alongside the wreath, handwritten by Quinn with a big black felt pen.

The money raised is used to create Christmas baskets, which are distributed to community members in the days leading up the big day.

"We put a large turkey and fruit – you know those mandarin oranges – in the basket, and candles and juice. Everything you need for a Christmas dinner," said Quinn.

In addition to the baskets, every family receives a gift card, valued at between $250 and $400.

Quinn says that the gift certificates help alleviate the pinch felt by families during the holidays.

"They come in and purchase what they need at home. They know what their necessities are. It's basically groceries that will help them through the holiday. But it's important that people shop for themselves. For example, young mothers may need baby milk and diapers."

Meechum's also features the Angel Tree, a Christmas tree with stars hanging on it. Written upon these stars, the age and gender of less fortunate children in the community.

Irene Quinn, Beverly's daughter-in-law, has been working at the store and on the projects for years.

The donations, she says, come from community members, businesses and the band council. The local bank and band council, she says, are major contributors.

In order to determine who could use the extra help, the community has formed a committee. Made up of members from a number of Mistissini entities – including the health department, welfare department and band office – they put together a list of families and children.

Discretion, says Irene, is a priority for the group, as families may not want to be identified as needing charity. She says that the large group of volunteers who help the store pull off the charity drive every year appreciate that.

For Irene, the Wreath of Hope and Angel Tree are points of pride. They require a lot of work, coordination and planning. But she says that helping her community makes it all worthwhile.

"The whole pay-it-forward mentality comes into play. My children have grown up knowing what the cause is about. Being able to give back feels great. It's important for my children to know that there are people out there who have little, and who need this support. It really hits home."

Collaborative, grassroots fundraisers like this one are underway in many other Cree communities.

In Chisasibi – where the Fire Department has raised money and distributed food vouchers for years – the Justice Department is getting into the game for the first time.

They have set up baskets in the community's grocery and convenience stores. And they will drive around the community and collect food door-to-door.

But rather than rely on volunteers, the Justice Department's effort features a special twist. It is being carried out by people involved in the system.

"They're going door-to-door, picking up dry goods or whatever people are donating. And they will help sort out the food out and distribute it. It's an opportunity for them to give back to the community. And it shows that they're trying to change," said Marlene Bearskin, a justice officer for Chisasibi.

Back in Mistissini, things are ramping up, as fundraising for the Wreath of Hope kicks into high gear.

When it started the fundraiser, Meechum's originally asked people to donate goods. But after time, the amount of food given increased, forcing them to rent a gym in order to sort it all out. "It was simply overwhelming how much food we were receiving," said Beverly.

She says that community continues to give generously.

But despite her involvement in organizing both the Wreath of Hope and Angel Tree, Beverly does not actually take part in the delivery of the dinners or toys.

She did once. But she says she found it too emotional, and too overwhelming.

She says she remembers children, standing at the end of a hallway as she entered a home. They looked down at her, shrieked, overjoyed at what she was bringing.

"I choked up because I realized how excited they were. I grew up with no Santa Claus. I can still see them down the hallway. I don't think I can go in another home without crying."

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The Make-It-Happener

The Montreal Council for Women names Nakuset Woman of the Year

By Jesse Staniforth

Nakuset is one of the most visible Aboriginal figures in Montreal for two reasons: she's involved in a multitude of important projects, and she's always willing to talk about them. In late November, the Montreal Council of Women chose to name her their Woman of the Year in recognition of her many contributions to the community, which she serves as the executive director of the Montreal Native Women's Shelter (MNWS), co-president of the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network, and host of the community TV show *Indigenous Power*.

Typically self-mocking, she said, "I always look around and go, 'How did I get here? How is it possible?'"

There's a good answer to those questions, however: Nakuset is always ready to speak about issues affecting Montreal's Indigenous communities, whether it's at civic events, to news reporters, or on committees.

"Really, of all the people in Montreal? You're asking me?" she laughed, channelling her disbelief that she's so frequently asked to make speeches. "But I always rise to the challenge. If I'm going to speak to the people, I pick something that's representative of the people and the truth. This is what I know. I know what's going on in Montreal – I know the projects that I'm involved with."

This year has been a huge one for Nakuset and many of the initiatives she's been involved in. The beginning of December marks the first anniversary of an agreement between the MNWS and Batshaw Youth and Family Services to improve the connections between the youth protection agency and Aboriginal communities. Since

that time, Nakuset has overseen the acclaimed *Inspirational Aboriginal Women* photo exhibition (of women who received help from the MNWS and have overcome hardship), which ran in September and October at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and has launched her own TV show.

That show, *Indigenous Power,* is becoming her next big project, even though she only has time to work on it when she's on vacation.

"The reason why I have a TV show is that I'm often on the news," she said. Following the signing of the agreement with Batshaw last year, news organizations invited Nakuset as well as officials from other Montreal Indigenous organizations to talk about how Aboriginal people should be represented in media.

"I kind of monopolized it," she said, "saying they needed to do this and that. I came prepared with documents and talked about the initiatives we're doing. Also, I told them, 'You need to put Aboriginal Day on the news. I always see St. Jean Baptiste, but I never see Aboriginal Day. I have First Nations children and they need to know this is a holiday.' So guess who was on the news this year for Aboriginal Day?"

As they were finishing up their Aboriginal Day broadcast, producers mentioned that Bell Media owns the local CTV affiliate, CFCF, and that they were starting a community television show to cover Indigenous issues.

"I joked that they should hire me, because I could be the Indian Oprah. Everybody laughed, but then I got a call the next day saying, 'You're on.'"

So began Nakuset's new career as what she calls the "Make-It-Happener" of the show *Indigenous Power*, about Aboriginal people in Montreal, which she hosts and organizes. Episodes so far have featured interviews with musicians, filmmakers and actors, including Mohawk guitarist Corey Diabo of the band Jonas and Mohawk actor Kaniehtiio Horn. Future episodes will profile Inuit culture and discuss the issue of urban Aboriginal homelessness.

"The TV show is something I love to do," she said. "I don't get paid for it – it's community television. I took time off work, but when I take my vacation time it's to do my TV show. The shelter and the network are my job, and I have three children, and I'm a single mom. So it takes a backburner. Putting the shows on the air is my hobby."

In the future, if she has the time, she wants to approach the Aboriginal People's Television Network to sell them the show. But for the time being, she's simply too busy – and she's happy to have the show beaming out a positive message to TV audiences in both Montreal and Toronto.

"I see Aboriginal people as amazing, hopeful and dynamic. Do not feel sorry for our people! We are fantastic, and you're going to want to be one!"

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Roderick Rabbitskin

Courageous broadcaster passes away

Eeyou Istchee has lost one of its most prominent broadcasters. Roderick Rabbitskin passed away from heart failure on December 1 in Mistissini.

For years Rabbitskin was a constant presence in many people's lives as the sensitive man discussing the issues of the day as a radio host on CBC North.

Rabbitskin worked for the public broadcaster for 19 years, where he developed a close friendship with CBC colleague Dimitri Katadotis.

Reached by phone, Katadotis remembered Rabbitskin's incredible sense of humour and passion for Cree language and culture. He also said Rabbitskin was a great friend.

"You could tell him anything and he didn't judge you," said Katadotis. "It was a profound thing with him."

Integrity is often developed through difficult and painful experiences during one's youth. And Rabbitskin wasn't a stranger to either, having experienced sexual abuse at the hands of a family friend and bullying by his peers for being gay.

Yet rather than allow the pain to fester, he chose to speak about it publicly. Doing so was part of his healing journey. And he hoped that some of his listeners might connect with his story, and that it might help them on theirs as well.

In a 2010 profile in the Nation, Rabbitskin went public with his sexuality. It was a difficult decision.

"There were times in high school when I didn't go to public places or events because I knew what was going to happen if I went," Rabbitskin told the Nation. "I didn't associate with people. I just stayed away. A lot of times I was alone. The only people I could talk to were my parents and my brothers and sisters."

After CBC North shared news of his death on Facebook, hundreds of people expressed their condolences.

"I will miss hearing you on the radio Rod!" said one. "You will be missed by many. Fly high my beautiful friend.

Susannah's Journey

A Cree family from Whapmagoostui is raising funds to attend a Florida conference for families impacted by a rare genetic disorder.

Their 12-year-old Susannah was diagnosed with Sotos syndrome shortly after her birth. The condition causes children to grow rapidly during the initial years of their lives. Susannah's speech and cognitive development problems stem from the genetic disorder.

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Susaannah Kawapit (award for participating in 2013 Annie Whiskeychan Day)

Susannah's mother, Rachel Kawapit, says the family has never met anyone else with this rare condition. She says that the three-day conference in Orlando in July would be a valuable way to connect with other families who are living the same experience.

"It's a conference where families can get together and share what they're going through. It would allow Susannah to meet other children like her."

Kawapit and husband Bruno Sheshamush are hoping to raise $20,000 for the conference, money that will pay for the expensive airfare out of their remote community. They prepare meals, such as Chinese food and Indian tacos, to sell on an online forum to the community. They will soon raffle off a sewing machine.

In addition to putting the family in touch with others facing Sotos, the conference features leading doctors and researchers who will speak about the syndrome. Attendees will also have the opportunity to meet with a specialist free of charge.

Kawapit says her daughter is resilient and strong, which she attributes to the multiple surgeries she's undergone. Though she has difficulty speaking, Susannah is able to express herself through a limited vocabulary and gestures.

"She has a way of communicating with us. Even though she can't have a conversation in a normal way," says Kawapit.

The family has wanted to attend the conference since finding out about it three years ago.

They feel it would help empower them to chart a happy and successful future for themselves and their daughter.

"We've never met anyone else with this syndrome. So we're curious about what's ahead for Susannah. We always wanted to see how other families have handled it."

You can keep up-to-date of the family's fundraising efforts by visiting their Facebook page: Susannah's Journey to Orlando. Plus you can send the family a donation directly through e-mail to rach_kshesh@hotmail.com

Competition indicates promising mineral deposits

The Cree Mineral Exploration Board (CMEB) held its seventh annual Rock Competition this month.

"The competition's purpose is to motivate people to check for rocks that contain mineralization when they are in the bush and educate people about mining and geology," said Youcef Larbi, chief geologist of the CMEB.

This year's $1500 first place prize was awarded to Marjorie Asquabanskum of Wemindji, who submitted a granite rock containing sulfide gold mineralization. She found the rock while out on her usual walking path not far from town.

"The composition of mineralization is the most important thing," said Larbi. "It tells us where we can find the mother-rock or the bedrock for a mine."

Larbi said that discovering this particular type of mineralization in granite is quite rare. It is valuable because it most likely indicates a deposit of gold somewhere nearby.

The second place prize of $1000 was awarded to Richard Rick from Nemaska, who submitted samples of pyrite and chalcopyrite. According to Larbi, pyrite samples like these tend to be found in areas that are high in basic metal concentration, and provide geologists with information that could prove helpful in locating mineral-rich digging sites for future mines.

"The mineralization of pyrite and chalcopyrite could be indicators of silver, copper, cobalt, nickel, iron and all these kinds of minerals," said Larbi. "If the rock contains some mineralization that means there's something around and that's when we start the exploration."

The third place prize of $500 remained untaken, as Asquabansum and Rick were the only participants in this year's competition. The recent plunge in global commodity prices for minerals and metals, as well as the sluggish, uncertain state of the mining industry in Eeyou Istchee may have been factors contributing to a recent decrease in interest among Cree communities regarding mining-related activities.

However, Larbi said that despite the competition's lowest participant turnout ever, the contest was a success based on the merit of the submissions from this year's winners.

"Usually I get six rock submissions, and three of high quality," said Larbi. "I only had two competitors this year, but they were two quality submissions."

Walking the talk

My journey for a uranium-free Eeyou Istchee

by Joshua Iserhoff

It was a beautiful afternoon in Mistissini. The sunrays kept us beaming as we traveled across my Grandpa Iserhoff's territory. Grandpa Joe is no longer with us but Dad would share a story of their moments while we roamed around the dirt road. Mom would often be smitten by a beautiful spruce tree while my sister busy snapping photo shots of Grandpa's beautiful land.

It was one of those moments that you knew it was special to be with family. We all laughed and reminisced. Grandpa's trees are big and healthy but we were sad to see some parts ravaged by loggers.

Dad had set out my bear trap along the way several days back. We decided to drive by the spot and, lo and behold, there was a bear desperately trying to break free. My father positioned me to a good spot where I could take the shot with my 30/30 shotgun, which he passed down to me several years back. I shot the bear and down it went.

My father carefully approached the bear while being his shadow. Bear was gone into the animal world. Mom and sister were rejoicing in the back while our curious dog Jojo sat next to the bear in wonderment. I leaned over to the bear and whispered in his ear "Thank you for your sacrifice." And I gave thanks to God for that tremendous blessing.

You see, the bear is the most respected animal in the Cree world. When killing one, it is treated with the utmost honour. I marvelled at the beautiful coat. It was wonderful and healthy. He was fat and simply majestic. I now was a great hunter! I saw my father face fill with pride and mom's joy filled our hearts with happiness.

We were ecstatic for we also had named people who we would share the bear with. Another great Cree tradition – sharing! While my dad freed the bear, my mother and my sister went to the beautiful spruce trees and began to collect boughs. I asked my mom why and she answered, "The boughs are for the bear to lay."

I now see clearly of what it means to keep our Cree tradition and heritage alive. The moment had come to me for what I have always wanted. I hunted with Dad many times and sure, we killed a lot of game, but this time was different. I knew that moment was sacred. I took in every moment and stored as many images as I could as we began to work on the bear. My father showed me how to cut the bear and I think I may need to kill another one to master it. I was learning.

Willie and Annie Iserhoff

Joshua Iserhoff

I was taking in what my father experienced with his father, Grandpa Joe. I knew the moment was a pivotal one for a father and son – that's how it was done and it's how one preserves culture and tradition. Father teaching as the son begins to understand. I love that moment.

Several years ago, I was asked what I thought of uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee. I didn't hear anything from the higher offices and so I didn't have much to say except for maybe, I'll comment later. Which means, I have to do some research and asked around. Sure enough, it was bad and the uranium explorations had already began in our backyards.

I dove into websites and watched documentaries and it was about that time that the Cree youth of Mistissini began to voice their concerns. I sat with the youth at our meetings and we decided to issue a communiqué standing with our brothers and sisters in Mistissini: we say no uranium. Since 2012, it is the same word spoken. No to uranium mining/development in Eeyou Istchee.

Months have passed, as have more proceedings, a moratorium and BAPE hearings. It has been a whirlwind for Eeyou Istchee. I think most people thought that once we said no that it was the end. But the fight continues.

The youth began to talk about a walk from Mistissini to Montreal to show the world that we mean business, that we have spoken as people and that we say no to uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee.

This trek was a recurring topic in my board meetings. I sat in on a meeting in Montreal and learned that the walk was happening in a

Our youngest walker at Mashteuiatsh kids name is- Utchimaou and father Jason Coonishi

few weeks. I told the members that I would join and be part of the committee and walk for a day or two. Then three days. I thought of my meetings and the cold.

I sat thinking of this walk for days. Before I participate in anything I ask myself this: What is my intention for this? What message will it teach people? For myself? Is my heart in it? Sitting in my comfortable brown leather chair, I began to pray.

I want to be involved in things that I believe in, because if I do people will feel it.

I closed my eyes and as if a dream so real I relived every sacred moment when I killed that bear. I want this feeling and experience to be passed down to my children, my grandchildren, my nephew… I want that tangible connection to earth and its sacredness to live on for generations to come. What my Grandpa Joe had instilled in my father and was now passed on to me – I want that to continue for ages to come.

This bear, looking so healthy in his shiny coat, made me proud of our land. Knowing the bear ate from the land and drank from the waters of Mistissini as do the countless other species that live off the land. I was given this revelation and I cannot let this slide.

And so, I have decided to trek all the way down from Mistissini to Montreal and walk the talk. As mom would say, "Let there be meat on your words – let your words have substance."

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Northern development

Quebec-Cree collaboration on the Plan Nord

by Alexander Reid

Unveiled in 2011 under then-Premier Jean Charest's Liberal government, the Plan Nord was the province's long-term strategy for improving access to and developing the vast mineral and energy resources north of the 49th parallel; a gargantuan landmass twice the size of France. The original Plan Nord, which sought to create 20,000 jobs and invest over $80 billion over the next 25 years, was effectively dismantled by the PQ during their term in office. However, now that the Quebec Liberal Party is back in power under Philippe Couillard, the Plan Nord has been resurrected in a less ambitious, but perhaps more practical form.

"The revival of the Northern Plan seeks to ensure continuity although the objectives are more modest than those announced in 2011," said Véronique Normandin, the press officer to the Ministry of Energy and Renewable Resources responsible for Plan Nord. "Indeed, the investments targeted by 2035 are on the order of $50 billion, as against $80 billion in the 2011."

In terms of rights to the land, the James Bay Cree are the biggest stakeholders in the region and enjoy more rights and a higher degree of control over the development of their land than many other Aboriginal communities due to the 1975 James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). As outlined in section 22 of JBNQA, the government must obtain the permission of the Cree before initiating any kind of large-scale resource extraction project on Cree territory. According to the JBNQA such projects, as well as all infrastructure development in the region must be first subjected to impact assessment processes.

The environmental and social impact assessment process of the JBNQA was the first of its kind to exist in Canada, and was tailored by the Cree specifically to ensure that any infrastructure and/or resource development on their territory is undertaken in a way that respects the Cree's desire to ensure fair compensation, as well as the conservation of their ancestral homelands and the protection of their culture.

Moreover, section 28 of the JBNQA stipulates that the government provide assistance to Cree entrepreneurs when possible, as well preferential treatment towards the Cree in terms of job creation, training and access to employment as well as implement policies which promote self-sufficient economic growth in Cree communities.

"The Crees have demonstrated in the past that we are in favour of sustainable development, provided the Cree Nation's workers and communities benefit, and the environmental and social impact assessment processes are respected," said Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Grand Council of the Crees (GCC).

"We've made a public statement of what our position is on Plan Nord, our 'Cree Vision of Plan Nord,' which we have given to the premier and other ministers and published online. Those are all the rights that must be respected or else we will not collaborate with any development."

"THE CREES HAVE DEMONSTRATED IN THE PAST THAT WE ARE IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDED THE CREE NATION'S WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES BENEFIT, AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESSES ARE RESPECTED."

According to Namagoose, the Cree community is receptive to the provincial government's plans, and wishes to collaborate with the government and private companies to develop the region, provided all partners are willing to operate within the guidelines of the JBNQA. Although legally, any breach of the treaty would be unconstitutional as the JBNQA has been entrenched in Canada's

Faith makes all things possible. Hope makes all things work.
Love makes all things beautiful.

May all members of Eeyou Istchee
have all three for Christmas and into the New Year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
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Chief Edward Gilpin and Deputy Chief Johnny Tomatuk
Cree Nation of Eastmain

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Wishing everyone in Eeyou Istchee a safe and happy holiday season.

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constitution since the Constitution Act of 1982.

According to Normandin, the current Plan Nord doesn't conflict with the JBNQA.

"The Quebec government intends to abide by the agreements signed or being negotiated with the Cree, the Inuit, the Innu and the Naskapi, who will be key partners in defining a shared perspective of northern development," said Normandin. "[Quebec] has also committed itself to observe its obligations concerning the consultation of the Aboriginal communities."

As incentive for active collaboration, Normandin said Quebec's Cree communities stand to gain considerable social and economic benefits as a result of the Plan Nord.

"Significant investments will be made in the coming years, particularly in infrastructure such as telecommunications and the rehabilitation of roads, including the James Bay Road," said Normandin. "The most recent budget announced a $100-million investment for Aboriginal training. Furthermore, economic projects such as Stornoway's Renard mine and Goldcorp's Eleonore mine will benefit the Cree from the standpoint of job creation and economic spin-off."

To manage the use of government funds across the diverse sectors and expansive regions encompassed by Plan Nord, the provincial government has decided to create the Société du Plan Nord (SPN), an administrative body that will be responsible for the proper execution of government-subsidized projects at local levels.

According to Cree-Quebec negotiator of the GCC, Abel Bosum, it is imperative that the government appoints a proportionate number of Cree members to the SPN in order to protect Cree interests.

"The composition of the SPN's board of directors should reflect the greater burden of development that has been borne and will continue to be borne by the Cree of Eeyou Istchee," said Bosum. "We recommended that Cree directors should be appointed to the SPN's board and that their number should reflect the impacts experienced by the Cree."

Normandin said that the provincial government reserves the right to appoint SPN board members. However, she stated that the majority of board members, including the chair, must come from the territory affected by Plan Nord. Normandin also stated that the SPN would oversee the creation of an Assemblée des partenaires (assembly of partners).

"The members of the Assemblée des partenaires will be appointed in a way that represents, in particular, the Aboriginal communities in the Nunavik, James Bay/Eeyou Istchee, Côte-Nord and Nord du Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean territories," said Normand. "Accordingly, the Cree will assume their place as do the other Aboriginal communities living in the territory that the Northern Plan covers."

In addition, Normandin said that the government is well underway establishing the Cree Development Corporation (CDC), which is intended to work closely with the SPN to protect and further Cree interests.

"The CDC is a financial vehicle managed by the Cree Nation to ensure returns on investments," said Normandin. "The Société du Plan Nord has a more horizontal mandate to coordinate in an integrated, coherent manner the development of the territory that the Plan Nord covers. Accordingly, the Cree Development Corporation and the Société du Plan Nord will act as complementary partners in the development of the territory."

Although, not present anywhere in the current Plan Nord, one final concern the Cree have expressed regarding resource extraction in the James Bay area is the possibility that Quebec may lift the temporary ban on uranium exploration and mining pending the findings of the Bureau d'Audiences Publiques sur l'Environnement (BAPE) review.

According to Namagoose, the official position of the GCC is that the Cree completely oppose lifting the moratorium on uranium exploration, or uranium mining under any circumstance.

Normandin said Quebec is waiting for the results of the BAPE study to be made public before commenting on the issue of lifting or extending the uranium moratorium. BAPE is scheduled to submit its findings to the government by May 20, 2015; the findings are to be made public within 60 days thereafter.

"SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS WILL BE MADE IN THE COMING YEARS, PARTICULARLY IN INFRASTRUCTURE SUCH AS TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE REHABILITATION OF ROADS, INCLUDING THE JAMES BAY ROAD."

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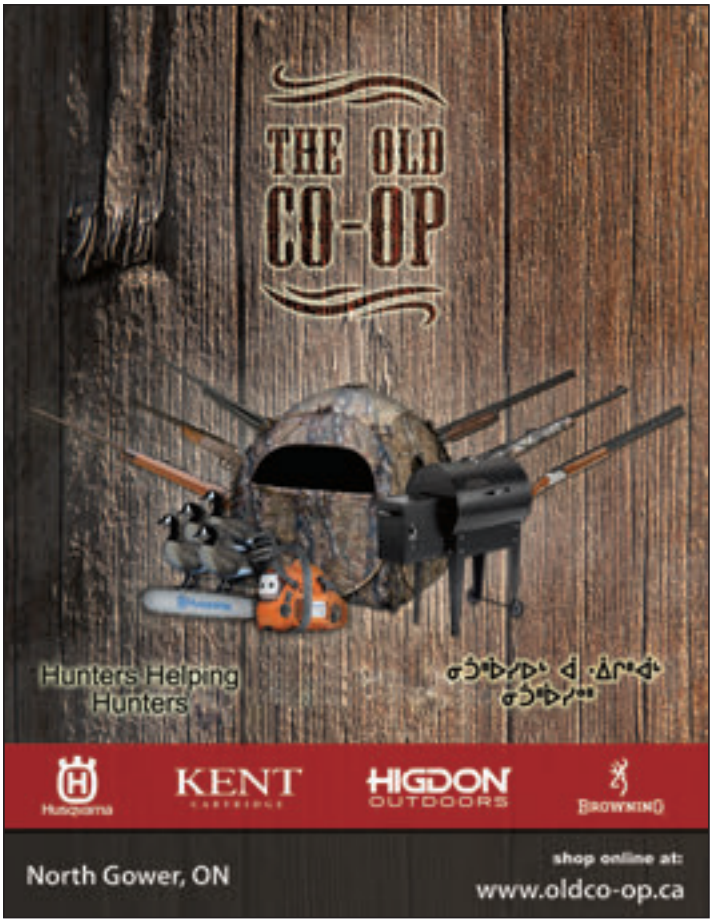

Winner
Marjorie Asquabanskum
from Wemindji.
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Winner Richard Rick from Nemaska.
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Cree design

Tim Whiskeychan's $5 coin now in circulation

by Jeremy East

Tim Whiskeychan is officially a minted success. In September, the Nation reported that the Royal Canadian Mint would use the Cree artist's design for a special edition $5 coin. The coin, which features a Cree hunter aiming his bow at flying geese from behind a blind, was launched at a special ceremony in Ottawa on November 25.

Romeo Saganash, MP for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou, presided over the event as Master of Ceremonies. After an opening prayer

Clockwise from top: Tim Whiskeychan & Romeo Saganash, A giant card board cut out of Tim's coin, O-Town Boyz drum group, George Pisimopeo Reporter & Nadine St-Louis, ED SFP
photos: Nadya Kwandibens

Eeyou Istchee James Bay
Regional Government
Gouvernement régional
d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James

Au nom de tous les membres du conseil du Gouvernement régional d'Eeyou Istchee Baie-James, nous vous souhaitons de passer d'agréables fêtes. Que 2015 vous apporte santé, bonheur et joie.

On behalf of all the Council Members of the Eeyou Istchee James Bay Regional Government, we wish you Happy Holidays. May 2015 bring you health, happiness and joy.

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photo Nadya Kwandibens

Celebratory dance

by Elder Claudette Commanda, the Ottawa drum group O-town Boyz performed an honour song. Saganash then read a congratulatory note to Whiskeychan from Quebec Aboriginal Affairs Minister Geoffrey Kelley.

Patrick Hadsipantelis of the Royal Canadian Mint also spoke on the importance of working with First Nations artists. The Mint has worked extensively with the Aboriginal artists' collective Sacred Fire Productions to commission several coins. Whiskeychan's goose design is the latest.

Whiskeychan says that inspiration for the piece was never hard to find.

"My father taught me about the livelihood of our people and how important it is to maintain our connection to the land," he said. "As an artist I try to bring that out in my work to preserve and explain how important that way of life still is today."

The coin's launch event was attended by several Crees, including Cree Mineral Exploration Board President Jack Blacksmith and Lloyd Cheechoo of the CNACA.

photo Nadya Kwandibens

Hattie Blackburn, Tim Whiskeychan and Jack R. Blacksmith

photo Gaston Cooper

Lloyd Cheecho, Tim Whiskeychan & Kenneth Gilpin

EEYOU ISTCHEE, 3 AM.
WOW, THAT WAS A FUN FAMILY GATHERING!
YEAH, IT WAS REALLY NICE.
WHEN I HEARD THERE WASN'T GOING TO BE ANY BOOZE I WASN'T SURE...
AFTER UNCLE PAUL CRASHED HIS TRUCK WHILE DRUNK DRIVING...
THE FAMILY DECIDED TO CUT BACK ON DRINKING.
IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH ME!
AND IF YOU DO DECIDE TO DRINK, PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!
KIIPAA!!
driving back. I'll txt u when I arrive, not gonna txt & drive!
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"WE HAVE TO STOP STICKING OUR HEADS INTO THE SAND LIKE OSTRICHES. WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH OUR MURDERED AND MISSING WOMEN, OUR ABUSED MEN, OUR YOUTH WHO ARE NOT GETTING SERVICES AND ARE HAVING A HARD TIME."

Bringing nations together for life

First Nations and Inuit suicide conference celebrates life and children

by Amy German

Attracting survivors, professionals and families from around the province, the 2014 First Nations and Inuit Suicide Prevention Association of Quebec and Labrador (FNISPAQL) conference honoured those who have lost people to suicide and those who work to prevent people from taking their own lives.

Bringing together frontline workers for the three-day pre-conference trainings followed by three days for the families and others whose lives have been touched by suicide, this year's event – held at the Montreal Sheraton Hotel November 22-27 – attracted over 600 delegates from various First Nation and Inuit communities throughout Quebec to share, learn and grow.

According to Director Thelma Nelson, this annual event, which began in 2001, has numerous people returning every year to share stories about their healing and to support those who are just embarking on their journey to heal. She described the participants as a mix of newcomers and repeat visitors.

As a different theme is explored every year through workshops, ceremonies and healings, Nelson said this year's event was about addressing the child and the inner child.

"When we say honouring our children, we automatically think about actual children, but there are so many adults who are still children because of the trauma that they have experienced. So we are basically honouring everybody here and everyone who survives," said Nelson.

As the FNISPAQL tries to accommodate the changing needs of the various communities throughout the province, Nelson said new programming this year addresses the needs of abused men who also suffered violence through relationships and residential schools.

"We have to stop sticking our heads into the sand like ostriches. We have to deal with our murdered and missing women, our abused men, and our youth who are not getting services and are having a hard time. There are suicides in all of the communities and there is still a lot to deal with," said Nelson.

According to Nelson, part of the event is to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to their communities and made a difference. This year's Police Officer of the Year Award was given to Waswanipi's Kimberly Gull.

Gull wasn't the only Eeyouch at the event. Oujé-Bougoumou's Glen Wapachee said he was meeting a lot of people from different communities and making friends as they could bond over shared experience.

"Many of the people here went to residential schools and they are going through the same problems that I am going through. For me, it is good to hear that I am not the only one who experienced these horrors in residen-

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tial school. This helps me a lot because in our community we don't have very many who come to give us the workshops that we need to deal with our problems and issues," said Wapachee. "Being here has given me a broader sense of what is happening outside of my own community."

For Chisasibi's Bobby Neacappo, who attended the event last year, the conference is an opportunity to share the knowledge he has learned over the years.

"This is not the first time I have come here. We have learned many things here as every Nation is different," said Neacappo. "I have learned much myself. When I was drinking, it was something that I had wanted to quit. I respect who I am now. I am Cree. This is why I stopped drinking – it has been almost 30 years now. I understand now that alcohol is not for me and it is not something of our Nation. I am not saying that it is bad people who are still drinking, I still respect them."

According to Julianna Snowboy, who was there on behalf of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) as part of the mental-health team, the conference was a great opportunity to learn about new programs and she was enjoying every moment of it.

"My team and I have been going to the different workshops because we are in the midst of trying to choose and develop programming and service delivery within the Cree Nation," said Snowboy.

"It is really good to see all of these different workshops because we are hopeful that we may have some access to these types of workshops back at home – so in a way we are kind of shopping around."

Snowboy, who has a background in psychology, said a large part of what she was looking for was post-care programming that could be available to individuals she feels are experiencing a service gap. Sometimes communities don't offer support for those returning home from a treatment centre. As some only have psychologists available for a month at a time, the need for these kinds of programs increases.

"I want to see what other people and First Nations are doing in their communities. We want to close that gap, not only using stuff from the western medical model, but also the traditional or holistic model of healing.

"Many of the Nations here are incorporating the teachings of their people and the rights of passage into their programs and this is what I am drawn to here," said Snowboy.

Cree Regional Authority Director of Justice and Correctional Services Donald Nicholls and his team often deal with individuals who are facing addictions and who are in the most difficult places in their lives.

"The trainers here really help the staff when working with our clientele in Justice and Corrections. We try to attend every year so that we can benefit not only from the workshops and the trainings, but also to meet and network with people who are in similar situations and find out how they approach and handle things. We really benefit from these types of conferences, and since this one is the largest of its type in the province it allows us to get together with people who are working with similar types of clientele," explained Nicholls.

Looking at the event from the perspective of a healer, Mike Standup, a Mohawk Spiritual Healer from Kahnawake, was on hand to help those in distress after participating in workshops.

"This year for me has been quite a learning experience. Many people, who I have seen in previous years, have been coming up to me sharing news about of their lives. Many of them are repeat clients and they are now talking about themselves using positive words and this, for me, has been very uplifting. I feel my work I do has been validated," said Standup.

For more information: www.dialogue-for-life.com/

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

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Joyeux Noël et
Bonne Année

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La commission Crie-Naskapie

Wishing you a wonderful
New Year 2014!
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Eric Myre Photographe Post production by: Innovate By Day

Mohawk Girls: Jenny Pudavick (Bailey), Brittany LeBorgne (Zoe), Heather White (Caitlin), Maika Harper (Anna)

Girls on the rez

Behind the scenes at the premiere of the new TV series *Mohawk Girls*

by Alexander Reid

To celebrate last month's premiere of the APTN original series, Mohawk Girls, the cast, crew, and producers hosted a screening party at the 99 Resto Bar in Kahnawake. Upwards of a 100 people, including family members and close friends of those affiliated with the show, came together to watch the airing of the first two episodes of a series some are calling *Sex and the City of Kahnawake*.

As *Mohawk Girls* illustrates, Kahnawake is a small, closely-knit community where news travels fast. It's clear that this television show represents more than an achievement for the creators and actors. For the most part, the Mohawk of Kahnawake – many of whom worked on set as extras, cooks and location service providers – see the show as a positive source of economic growth and prosperity for the entire community.

Series creator and two-time Gemini award winner Tracey Deer thanked her colleagues for their hard work as well as her fellow Kahnawa'kehró:non (the Mohawk people from Kahnawake) for giving her inspiration and embracing her vision. As a director who until now was best known for her non-fiction work, having attained critical acclaim for her 2005 documentary (also titled *Mohawk Girls*), Deer said making the successful leap to fiction marks a milestone in her career.

"I came up with the idea for this show around 10 years ago, but I've wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I was 12 years old," said Deer. "That little girl dreamed of fiction, dreamed of sets with big equipment. Being on set, it feels like this is where I belong, this is where I feel I'm supposed to be."

Showrunner Cynthia Knight, who works closely with Deer in the scriptwriting and storyboarding process, said the series contains accurate portrayals of the everyday challenges faced by women everywhere, especially women from minority cultures and communities.

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.
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May the New Year bring you joy, love and prosperity.
Merry Christmas from all of us at Cree School Board.

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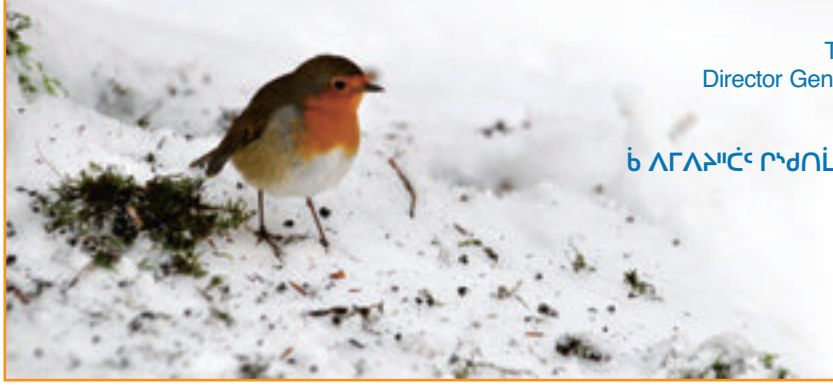

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Director General and Senior Directors of Cree School Board.

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Cree School Board
Commission scolaire Crie

"On the surface, it's light and entertaining, it's got four young women trying to find themselves," said Knight. "It's totally universal to every woman in her 20s who's trying to figure out: who she is, what kind of guy to date, who she wants to be; do you do what your family wants, or do you go your own way?"

Knight described the show as a "dramedy," meaning that it is primarily intended to make people laugh. However, she insists the series is also a vehicle for social and political change and that dealing with issues like racism and tolerance in a romantic comedy is effective because it gets past people's natural defenses and allows them to empathize to a greater extent with the characters and their dilemmas.

"Tracey and I both like to entertain, and educate through the entertainment as opposed to it being preachy or on the nose," said Knight. "A lot of non-Native people have weird misconceptions about Native people, about Mohawks in particular. This show is a romantic comedy, but showing a very specific world and showing the universality of it. What we really want to do is build bridges and get this message across to non-Natives – they're not weird or scary people, they're just like you or me."

Eric Myre Photographe Post production by: Innovate By Day

"What I know is Kahnawake because I'm from here, and as a Kahnawake woman I can say she's pretty accurate," explained LeBorgne. "It's TV so it's amped up somewhat for entertainment purposes, but at the core it is a fair representation."

LeBorgne's co-star, Heather White, plays Caitlin, a character who appears funny and confident in the first few episodes, but who, White said, goes on to explore some of the more heart-wrenching aspects of life on the reserve.

"What I hope people get out of Caitlin's storyline is that it's important to love yourself for who you are," said White. "Caitlin goes on this journey where she's not always smart-alecky and sassy with funny lines, she has a lot of self-esteem issues and hang-ups. Caitlin seeks validation from men, and she seeks out relationships that are maybe not the greatest."

But it doesn't stop there, according to Knight, the show reveals and then pushes boundaries even closer to home. Using humour as a suit of armour, *Mohawk Girls* confronts contemporary social issues in the Mohawk community, which many community members still consider highly controversial and taboo.

"What we are touching on is a Native girl falling in love with a white guy, and what that looks like and how the community responds," said Knight. "It's a touchy issue, we're very aware that some people will love it, some will be uncomfortable, and others will think we should not be talking about it. But hopefully even the negative comments will start a discussion."

Mohawk Girls airs back-to-back episodes at 9:00pm and 9:30pm, Sundays on OMNI 1 and Tuesdays on APTN.

"I came up with the idea for this show around 10 years ago, but I've wanted to be a filmmaker ever since I was 12 years old. That little girl dreamed of fiction, dreamed of sets with big equipment."

One of the leading stars, Brittany LeBorgne, plays the success-driven, type-A personality Zoe. LeBorgne said her character is an authentic depiction of a modern Mohawk woman, and her struggles are the same ones faced by women in her community every day.

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Sabtuan Adult Education Services
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Making our lives safer

Celebrating new Cree certified firefighters and instructors

by Evelyn Horsky

Family and friends from every Cree community joined newly certified Cree firefighters and instructors as they were honoured during a celebration in Montreal on November 27.

Lee Roy Blacksmith, the Fire Marshall for the Cree Nation, was a great Master of Ceremony. It started off with Director of Capital Works and Services Henry Mianscum welcoming everybody.

The keynote speaker, Romeo Saganash, MP for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou, delivered an impassioned speech about the importance of being a firefighter in a community, the pride in being a Cree and the significance of maintaining Cree traditions and culture. His speech was sincere, sometimes witty, and often humorous.

He was warmly applauded and joined Blacksmith and Mianscum as well as Benoît Laroche, Registrar and Director of Operations at the École nationale des pompiers du Québec (ENPQ), George Cox, Regional Fire Prevention Officer, and David Tordjman, Coordinator of Engineering Services at Cree Nation Government, in giving out the certificates to our new firefighters and instructors.

Expect more Cree firefighters on the job sometime in 2015. The next group of hopefuls are currently busy training in Chisasibi and Oujé-Bougoumou. At this rate, the Cree communities will see the goal of having 15 certified FF1's in each Cree community achieved. This event celebrated 39 graduating firefighters, who bring the total to 63 firefighters are on hand to protect Cree communities in case of fires and disasters.

Congratulations to all who have participated in this wonderful achievement.

Special guests also included Arnold Lazare, Director of Public Security, Mohawk Council of Kahnawake and lead instructor in the training program; Louisa Saganash, Director of the Cree Human Resources Development, who said the opening prayer; and Carrie Simard, Director of Human Resources, Oujé-Bougoumou.

Mr. Romeo Saganah

Mr. Henry Mianscum

LIST OF GRADUATES - FF1 CERTFICATION (39)

CHISASIBI
Ronald Herodier
Donivan Lameboy
Murray Rupert
Eddie Snowboy
Shane Snowboy

EASTMAIN
Darryl Gilpin
Reggie Gilpin
Eliza Moses
Jermey Shanush
Roger Weapenicappo

WEMINDJI
Gabriel Georgekish

WASKAGANISH
Kurtis Black
Roger Hester
Tyler Diamond
Anderson Jolly
Scott Stevens

WHAPMAGOOSTUI
Jordon Masty
Austin Natachequan
Steven Petagumskkum
David Shem

NEMASKA
Robert Capassisit
James Wapachee
David Wapachee
Marcel Wapachee
Neil Wapachee

WASWANIPI
Lawrence Dixon
Terence Dixon

MISTISSINI
Paul J Gunner
Faith Gunner
Thomas Longchap
Natasha Shecapio
Wayne Rabittskin
Joey Blacksmith
Uriah Neeposh

OUJE BOUGOUMOU
Stanley Bosum
Willy Bosum
Benoit St. Pierre
Vicky Bosum
Mitchell Wawatee

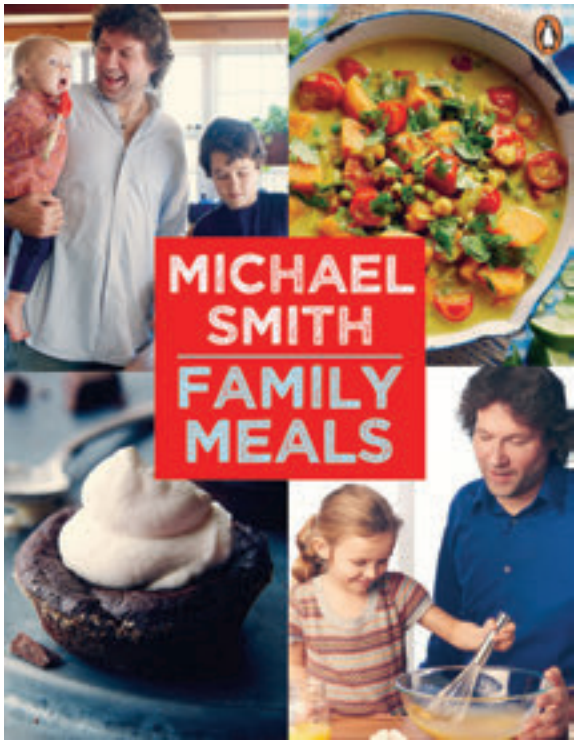
Holiday Entertaining

What to serve up during the season's celebrations!

by Amy German

Whether you are trying to up your game for holiday entertaining, learn new tricks, find resources to help you plan your family meals for the months to come or look at new recipes that will set the tone for your holiday party, you can't go wrong with any of our picks for great cookbooks to use or gift.

Michael Smith's latest *Family Meals*, Jamie Oliver's deepest dive into decadence yet in Jamie's *Comfort Food* and Matt Basile's daring *Street Food Diaries* all do the trick when it comes to creating something magical. If you're looking for a last-minute gift for your foodie's reading pleasure or just something for home entertaining, these three gems have a lot to offer.



Family Meals

by Michael Smith

For a new guide to inspire dishes that will please the palates of both the old and the young, Michael Smith's *Family Meals* takes into account what it's like to be the cook in a busy family. He has compiled some appealing and delicious recipes for healthy meals that can be done quickly or in advance or when you have time to spare.

Featuring sections on breakfasts and brunches, lunchboxes and snacks, simple salads, meals to cook ahead, soups, stews and casseroles, slow-cookers and pressure cookers, and family meals, this cookbook has easy recipes that will entice you into your kitchen.

Whether you are new to cooking or someone looking to be re-inspired when it comes to feeding the entire family, Smith's latest collection of recipes – his eighth to date – is a joy to cook from or just thumb through.

All-Day Sausage Lasagna

You can do a lot of things in your slow cooker – it can be a real lifesaver. Here it slowly transforms some quickly gathered ingredients into a deeply flavoured, satisfying lasagna just waiting for the family to get home.

Serves 4 to 6, with seconds and leftovers

- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) of vegetable oil
- 4 spicy Italian sausages, thickly sliced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- A 28-ounce can (796 mL) of crushed tomatoes
- A 5.5-ounce can (156 mL) of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of dried oregano
- 4 cups (1 L) or so of shredded mozzarella (about 10 ounces/280 g)
- 12 ounces (340 g) of cottage cheese
- ½ cup (125 mL) of freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 8 ounces (225 g) or so of oven-ready lasagna noodles (12 to 14 noodles)

Preheat your favourite heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Pour in the vegetable oil and toss in the sausages, searing until browned all over, about 10 minutes. Add the onions and garlic and continue sautéing as the onions soften, 2 or 3 more minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste and oregano.

Remove from the heat.

Fill your slow cooker with layers of flavour. Begin with one-third of the sausage mixture, then follow with one-third of the two cheese, half the noodles, a third of the sausage, a third of the cheeses, the remaining noodles, remaining sausage mixture and remaining cheese. Cover and cook on low for 4 to 6 hours. When you get back from wherever life takes you, serve and share!

Family Flavours

This is an easy dish to tote along to a potluck party. The slow cooker cooks the dish and also serves as a warming holder.

Stovetop Chicken with Herb Dumplings

For the Creamy Chicken Stew:

- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) or so of butter
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 celery ribs, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (250 mL) of white wine
- 1 cup (250 mL) of whipping cream
- 1 cup (250 mL) of water
- 1 cup (250 mL) of frozen green peas or corn
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) of fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of salt
- Lots of freshly ground pepper

For the tender dumplings:

- 1 cup (250 mL) of all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons (10 mL) of baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (2 mL) of white sugar
- ½ teaspoon (2 mL) of salt
- A handful of chopped fresh parsley (or 2 green onions, thinly sliced)
- ½ cup (125 mL) of milk
- ¼ cup (60 mL) of butter, melted

Start making the stew. Heat your favourite heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Pour in the vegetable oil, then add the butter (the oil prevents the butter from burning). Add and sear the chicken breasts, building a golden-brown crispy crust on each side, about 15 minutes total. Remove the delicious chicken to a plate.

To the skillet, add the onions, celery, carrot and garlic along with a splash or two of water to loosen and dissolve all the flavourful browned bits. Stir and cook until sizzling, 5 minutes or so. Reduce the heat to medium. Sprinkle in the flour and stir until it's evenly absorbed by the butter. Pour in the wine and stir the works again. Pour in the cream and water and continue cooking, stirring often, until the sauce is beautifully thickened and smooth.

Meanwhile, chop the chicken into bite-size pieces. Return them to the pan along with the peas. Season with thyme, salt and pepper. Turn off the heat.

To make the dumplings, in a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt. Stir in the parsley. Add the milk and melted butter, and stir together until the dough is just blended. Return the chicken stew to a slow simmer. Spoon 10 or 12 dumplings over the stew. Cook, uncovered, for 10 minutes, then cover tightly and cook until the dumplings are fluffy and tender, about 10 more minutes. Spoon, serve and share!

Chocolate Chip Brownies

Why not do a little treat-baking for your family? Why wouldn't you indulge your chocolate cravings? Why wouldn't you stir chocolate chips into brownies? Why let factories cook for you? A lot to ponder, but no worries. All will be answered with the first bite!

Makes 12 large or 16 medium treats

- 1 pound (450 g) of bittersweet dark chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup (250 mL) of butter
- 2 cups (500 mL) of all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (125 mL) of cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (2 mL) of salt
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups (500 mL) of white or brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups (500 mL) of chocolate chips or your favourite chocolate candy bits, divided in half

Preheat your oven to 350°F (180°C). Turn on your convection fan if you have one. Line a 13×9-inch (3.5 L) cake pan with parchment paper, extending the paper over the long sides to act as handles. Lightly spray the paper with cooking spray.

Toss the chocolate and butter into a medium bowl set over a slightly smaller pot of simmering water. Stir until melted and smooth, then remove from the heat.

In another medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt.

Crack the eggs into the bowl of your stand mixer. Measure in the sugar and vanilla. Beat on high speed until thick, creamy and smooth, scraping down the sides now and then. Smoothly stir in the melted chocolate mixture. Add the flour and stir on low speed just until evenly mixed. Too much mixing will toughen the brownies. Stir in half of the chocolate chips.

With a lightly oiled spatula, carefully spread the batter into the cake pan, smoothing the top. Sprinkle evenly with the remaining chips. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Cool completely in the pan. Using the paper handles, carefully lift the brownies from the pan. Cut as you wish, serve and share!

Family Flavours

An easy batch of brownies up your sleeve comes in handy. Lunchboxes, treat tables, bake sales, get-well gifts, party favours, long-delayed borrowed gear, outright bribes. Everybody loves a good brownie!

Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year!

Joyeux Noël
et Bonne Année!

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Happy Holidays & Happy New Year 2015

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May the holiday season fill your home with joy, your heart with love and your life with laughter.
Rest safely in the warmth of your family.
from Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, Staff and Board of Directors

Jamie's Comfort Food

by Jamie Oliver

For sumptuous meals fit for a king or a special occasion, *Jamie's Comfort Food* is an international guide to comfort, delight and delicious decadence.

This cookbook offers recipes for a wonderful and whimsical Winter Nights Chili, a Crispy Duck Lasagna that could become legendary and a Scrumptious Sticky Toffee Pudding that should become England's national dish.

If this brilliant collection of recipes, photos and personal anecdotes about each meal doesn't take you back to nostalgic moments of your youth, prepare to make some fabulous new memories!

Next-Level Steak & Onion Sandwich

I've got really early memories of my dad making steak sandwiches, which were absolutely gorgeous and always such a treat. In this recipe I want to take the joy of a steak sandwich to the next level by kind of taking the mighty steak off its pedestal a bit and putting most of the focus on awesome onions, to create the best steak sandwich ever.

Serves 4; 50 minutes; 553 calories

- 400g flank skirt steak or bavette
- 2 large onions
- 20g unsalted butter
- Olive oil
- 70g dark brown sugar
- 125mL red wine vinegar
- 1 ciabatta loaf
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Optional: English mustard
- 1 handful of watercress

Remove the steak from the fridge and let it come to room temperature, then cover it with greaseproof paper and bash it with the base of a pan to tenderize and make it all roughly the same thickness. Meanwhile, peel the onions, also removing the first layer of flesh (reserve this for a soup or stew), then slice into 2cm-thick rounds. Put the butter, a lug of oil and the sugar into a large non-stick frying pan on a medium heat. Once the butter has melted, place the onions into the pan in a single layer and cook for 5 minutes. Pour in the vinegar, pop the lid on, reduce the heat to low and cook for around 35 minutes, or until beautifully golden and caramelized on the bottom only, adding splashes of water to loosen, if needed.

Meanwhile, pop the ciabatta into the oven, turn onto 110°C (225°F, gas ¼) and leave to warm through. Season the steak all over with sea salt and black pepper. Place a large non-stick heavy-bottomed pan on a high heat. Once screaming hot, drizzle the steak with olive oil, then put it into the pan and cook for 3 minutes on each side for medium, or to your liking. Remove to a plate, rest for 1 minute, then slice 1cm thick and toss through its own resting juices with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

Cut the warm ciabatta in half and rub the inside of each piece in the steak resting juices. Spread on some mustard, if you like, then layer over the caramelized onions, the steak and pinches of watercress. Pop the other piece of bread on top, press down lightly, carve up into decent chunks and get involved.

© Jamie Oliver Enterprises (2014 Jamie's Comfort Food) Photographer: David Loftus

Top photo: Jamie's Comfort Food by Jamie Oliver is published by Penguin Books and in Canada by HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Butter & Sage Gnudi

Gnudi is a fantastic dish – you must make it. It's elegant, light in texture, easy to make and for most people, very unusual. My dear friend April Bloomfield, from the very cool Spotted Pig in New York, has recently made this dish most famous, but it certainly dates back at least a good 30 or 40 years, and is made all over Tuscany. Gnudi means naked, and quite simply this is a ricotta ravioli without the pasta (aka naked). The proviso for this dish being genius to the point where your guests won't stop talking about it is to use top-quality ricotta, butter and Parmesan, as well as beautiful freshly picked sage.

Serves 6-8; 45 minutes; plus chilling; 455 calories

Gnudi

- 1kg best-quality ricotta
- 100g Parmesan cheese
- 1 whole nutmeg, for grating
- Fine semolina, for dusting

To serve:

- Good-quality unsalted butter
- 1 bunch of fresh sage (30g)
- Parmesan cheese, for grating
- 1 lemon

Put the ricotta into a bowl with a pinch of sea salt and black pepper, then finely grate in the Parmesan and a few scrapings of nutmeg. Beat it together, then have a taste to check the balance of seasoning is right – you want the nutmeg to be very subtle. Generously cover a large tray with semolina, then roll the ricotta mixture into 3cm balls, rolling them in the tray of semolina as you go until really well coated. You should get around 40 gnudi from this amount of mixture. Shake and cover really well with the semolina and leave for 8 hours or preferably overnight in the fridge (don't cover the tray) – the semolina will dehydrate the ricotta, giving the gnudi a lovely fine coating.

The gnudi will only take 3 minutes to cook and I like to cook them in 2-portion batches to take care of them. So, shake the excess semolina off 2 portions-worth of gnudi and cook them in boiling salted water while you melt a large knob of butter in a frying pan on a medium heat and pick in about 20 sage leaves to crisp up. Remove the crispy leaves to a plate and scoop the gnudi directly from the water into the frying pan, adding a spoonful of the cooking water. When the butter and water have emulsified, take off the heat and grate over a layer of Parmesan, add just a few drops of lemon juice, then toss together. Serve in warm bowls straight away with an extra grating of nutmeg and Parmesan and the crispy sage leaves, while you get on with the next batch, wiping the frying pan clean between batches. Welcome to the naked club.

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Gnudi can be easily transformed with the addition of one seasonal ingredient. Asparagus tips, podded peas, wild mushrooms or a few fresh tomatoes – any of the above with that sage butter will rock the party. In summer, some smashed fresh basil leaves in the ricotta mixture are lovely; or in winter, a splash of quality red wine use to deglaze the frying pan adds much deliciousness.

Chocolate Celebration Cake

Every household needs a blooming good chocolate cake in their repertoire, whether it's just for the hell of maintaining your chocolate quota, or of course for those special occasions where you need a freshly baked cake, or need to arrive somewhere with a showstopper in hand. Regardless, this chocolate celebration cake will reset everyone's expectations of what a chocolate cake should be – it's delicious, it has incredible texture, it looks absolutely amazing, and it's a pleasure to make and watch people enjoying.

Serves 16; 2 hours; 484 calories

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- Sponge
- 250g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
- 150g quality dark chocolate (70%)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 300g caster sugar
- 6 large eggs
- 150g self-raising flour
- 4 tablespoons quality cocoa powder

Chocolate Rice Layer

- 300g quality dark chocolate (70%), plus extra to serve
- 1 large knob of butter
- 1 splash of double cream
- 100g puffed rice cereal

Nougat Frosting

- 2 large egg whites
- 3 tablespoons runny honey
- 200g caster sugar
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- optional: ½ teaspoon orange blossom or rose water, natural pink food colouring

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F, gas 4). Grease a deep 23cm loose-bottomed cake tin and line the base and sides with a double layer of greaseproof paper. For the sponge, smash up the chocolate and melt in a large heatproof bowl with the butter, oil and sugar over a pan of gently simmering water until smooth and glossy. Remove the bowl from the heat and leave to cool for 10 minutes, then, using an electric hand whisk at high speed, one-by-one beat in the eggs until combined. Sift in the flour and cocoa with a good pinch of sea salt and beat for a short while until just combined. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for around 50 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out ever so slightly gooey (the top of the cake will rise up and crack slightly, but don't worry, it'll end up covered by all your lovely toppings). Leave to cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Place on a cake stand, use a long knife to carefully slice the sponge into 3 equal rounds and remove the top two sponges to separate plates (go to jamieoliver.com/how-to to see how to do this).

For your mega-crispy chocolatey rice layer, smash up the chocolate and melt with the butter and cream in a large heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water until smooth and glossy. Leave to cool for 5 minutes (to avoid soggy cereal!), then stir in the puffed rice until evenly coated. Divide the mixture onto the 3 cooled sponge layers and spread out evenly across the tops, going right to the edges.

To make the nougat frosting, place the egg whites in a heatproof bowl with the honey, sugar, cream of tartar, a good pinch of salt and a splash of water. Place over a pan of gently simmering water, turn up the heat, and with an electric hand whisk beat for 6 to 7 minutes, or until it starts to form peaks. Remove the bowl from the heat, add the vanilla extract, orange blossom or rose water and a dot of food coloring (if using), then carry on beating the mixture until thick. Leave to cool for 5 to 10 minutes, then evenly top each sponge and stack them up nicely. To finish the cake off, use a large knife to shave some extra chocolate, then sprinkle it over the top (there's a video on jamieoliver.com/how-to to show you how to do this). Add your candles or sparklers, get them lit and indulge in chocolate celebration cake heaven.

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SEASONS GREETINGS

MNP wishes you, your family and community a happy holiday season and prosperous new year.

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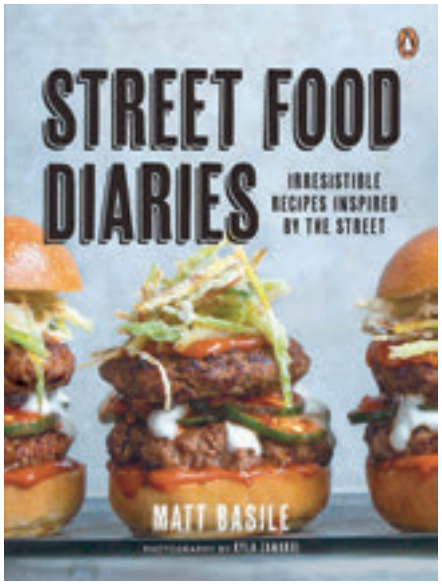

Street Food Diaries

by Matt Basile

Hunting for all-out party food that will be the talk of your guests for weeks to come – food that's fun, festive and fabulous – look no further than Matt Basile's *Street Food Diaries: Irresistible Recipes Inspired By The Street*. This cookbook has sections devoted to the kind of food that comes in buns, delights that are guaranteed to make you sweat, a chapter devoted to incredibly indulgent things you can do with bacon, food on sticks, brunch-type foods and lots more.

A great gift for the foodie who is into giving their mouth an adventure all of its own, Basile brings all of the fun of street food to your kitchen with dishes that are daring, dynamic and fun to make.

For that matter, as Basile's unintimidating writing style and stunningly gorgeous imagery is bound to get any mouth watering, this is the kind of cookbook that will get a kitchen novice trying new and exciting dishes as it is an endless source of inspiration.

Why not liven up your New Year's Eve party with the likes of the following delights.

Bacon and Corn Chowdah

- 1 stalk celery
- 1 leek
- 1 large carrot
- 2 lb (1 kg) slab double smoked bacon
- 6 corn on the cob
- 2 cups (500 mL) salted butter
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) ground turmeric
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) curry powder
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) kosher salt
- 2 cans (14 oz/390 mL each) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup (250 mL) coconut milk
- 4 cups (1 L) whipping cream

It's pronounced Chowdahhh

Before you do anything, finely chop the celery, leek and carrot. Also, cut the bacon into small cubes. In a large pot, boil water over high heat and cook the corn for approximately 6 minutes, or until tender. Remove the corn from the water, reserving the water for the chowdah stock. Cut all the kernels off the cob and place them in a bowl.

In a large soup pot, cook the bacon over high heat for approximately 4 minutes (no oil required). As the bacon begins to get a little crispy, add the celery, leek and carrot. Stir well, and continue to cook. When the contents in the bottom of the pot start to brown a little, add about a ladle's worth of the reserved corn cooking water and add the butter. Stir everything thoroughly so that all the flavours get picked up by the veg.

Building on the Base

At this point, toss in all the turmeric, curry powder, salt,

corn kernels and chickpeas. Give everything yet another good, solid stir so that all these flavours are picked up by the bigger ingredients. Add the coconut milk and reserved corn cooking water (you'll need 16 to 20 cups/4 to 5 L or so) to your chowdah. Turn down the heat to low, add your cream slowly, stirring it in, and allow the soup to simmer, uncovered, for 3 to 4 hours, or until the curry flavors have matured. Every hour, add another 2 cups (500 mL) of corn water ONLY if the soup is looking dry.

I highly suggest blending the soup just enough that it's still chunky but the chickpeas can help thicken it. You can either let the soup cool a bit and blend it all or just take a portion of it, blend it, and then stir it back into the pot. Always taste the soup and add salt if you feel you need it. Soup is one of those things where everyone has their own salt tolerance.

And just like any other soup, it always tastes better the next day.

Miami Beef Ribs

- Juice from 4 limes, divided
- ½ cup (125 mL) soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons (45 mL) hoisin sauce
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) chili paste
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) honey
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) five-spice powder
- 20 Miami ribs, 3-bone thin-cut
- ¼ cup (60 mL) sunflower shoots

Beef Ribs, Baby

Combine the juice from three of the limes with the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, chili paste, honey and five-spice powder in a bowl. Mix it thoroughly so that there are no clumps. Put the beef ribs into this sauce, cover, and marinate in the fridge overnight.

If you are using a BBQ, preheat it to 450°F (230°C). Take the saucy ribs and grill them for approximately 3 minutes per side. If BBQ isn't an option, place them in a grill pan, and cook them on the stovetop or under the broiler for approximately 3 minutes per side. Squeeze the remaining lime's juice over the finished beef ribs. Because these are cut so thinly, they don't take long to cook. If anything, the skill in this dish is not overcooking the ribs.

Transfer the ribs to a serving platter, and garnish with sunflower shoots.

Holy Kobe Corn Dogs

- 10 wooden skewers
- 1 cup (250 mL) yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup (250 mL) all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons (20 mL) baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon (1 mL) kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon (1 mL) black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 cup (250 mL) 2% milk
- 10 all-beef hot dogs
- ½ cup (125 mL) yellow mustard
- 2 tablespoons (30 mL) sambal oelek

Sup, Dog?

First, make your batter. In a large bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, salt, and pepper. Crack in the egg, add the milk, and then mix your batter thoroughly. Skewer the hot dogs with the wooden skewers, and dip them in the batter. Fry them, three at a time, in a pan (not a skillet) with 1/2 inch (1 cm) of canola oil heated to

350°F (180°C) for approximately 3 minutes on one side. Flip and do 3 minutes on the other side, then rest them on paper towel to soak up the excess oil.

In a bowl, mix the mustard with the sambal. Now you have spicy sambal mustard that has the familiarity of the bright yellow mustard but with a bit of kick.

If Your Heart Desires … Just Add Bacon

You can take this recipe one step further by cooking some strips of bacon to the point where they are cooked but not too crispy to manipulate. Wrap the bacon tightly around the dog and pierce each end of the bacon with the skewer to keep it in place. Batter it and fry it as above. (P.S. You're welcome!)

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HEALTH MATTERS

by Amy German

Your health on the road

How to keep you and your family healthy while traveling abroad

With the deep freeze well underway, traveling abroad is a sure fire way to escape the hardships of winter, if only briefly.

Your trip, however, is only going to be as good as you feel, so take some advice from a medical professional who knows how to make your travel experience a healthy one.

According to Dr. Kianoush Dehghani, Public Health and Preventive Medicine Specialist Physician from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB), healthy travel begins with careful planning, sometimes months in advance.

Her advice is that if you are traveling abroad, particularly to developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, start your planning at least two months in advance.

"Depending on the destination, it is important to see your family doctor at least 4-6 weeks before you leave to discuss the management of your known health problems away from home, and to get a prescription for your usual medications for the travel period. Your family doctor should also make sure that your basic vaccinations are up-to-date," said Dehghani.

As required vaccinations can vary from location to location and individual to individual, depending on your health needs, this is an important conversation to have with your doctor.

According to Dehghani, the most common travel-related health problems are infectious diseases and accident-related injuries. While you might not be able to avoid getting into a car accident or cutting your foot on the coral, certain kinds of infectious diseases, like Hepatitis A, can be prevented with a vaccination. Other issues can also be averted by simple healthy behaviour.

"For example, traveler's diarrhea is a common infection in most tropical

Dr. Kianoush Dehghani

destinations outside North America. This can be prevented by regular hand-washing (with soap and water, or a liquid hand sanitizer) and by avoiding street food, and instead eating well-cooked meals in well-established places, like hotel restaurants," said Dehghani.

As it is sometimes easy to throw caution to the wind on holiday, Dehghani said that being abroad is actually where it is most important to practice healthy behaviour, as the risks can be high. For example, motor-vehicle accidents and drowning are the most common causes of death among North American travelers, so being cautious in the water or on the road is never more important than while away. She added that often avoiding injuries is all about common sense and avoiding drunk driving, speeding or walking alone at dark in more deserted areas.

Dehghani also said that healthy sexual behaviour is important during international travel.

"Many individuals are infected with more serious sexually transmitted infections (STIs), like gonorrhea, syphilis or HIV, during their travels. It is very important to avoid anonymous sexual encounters, like Internet dates, and commercial sex workers at all times, but especially when travelling. If you choose to have consensual sex, it is important to use condoms at all times and bring some from Canada," said Dehghani.

People taking medication for ailments such as diabetes should see a doctor at least six weeks before leaving, especially if they are travelling to another time zone. How much medication to bring is another issue that needs to be discussed with a physician as is procuring a letter from the doctor explaining the medical condition and the need to carry medications as

A Resource Mine

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Jessica Frigon

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well as needles and syringes in the airplane (for example, for an insulin injection). Safe storage of that medication needs to be discussed with a doctor or pharmacist as some medications can lose effectiveness in hot weather. Those with diabetes should check the Canadian Diabetes Association's website for travel advice: www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/healthy-living-resources/general-tips/travel-tips-for-people-with-diabetes

For those planning a getaway with the very young or the very old, Dehghani recommended first and foremost to choose a travel destination that is family friendly meaning that it has access to clean water and is practical for everyone in the family.

Just like at home, she said that breastfeeding is the safest food and drink for infants while abroad and that this is a great tip to remember.

As for everyone beyond that stage of life, Dehghani said that when travelling in tropical countries it is important to eat well-cooked meals from an established hotel or resort restaurant, and drink boiled or bottled water.

"Infants, small children and the elderly are more prone to health problems such as infection diseases. So if they develop signs and symptoms of infections, it is important to contact a designated medical professional as soon as possible as their medical condition can deteriorate rapidly. You may want to ask your family doctor for oral rehydration salts for your infants, toddlers or the elderly prior to your departure. Infants, small children and the elderly can become dehydrated quickly with diarrhea, so it is important to keep them hydrated and contact a health professional as soon as possible when they develop symptoms," said Dehghani.

> "Depending on the destination, it is important to see your family doctor at least 4-6 weeks before you leave."

She recommended that if your trip is to somewhere tropical, like the Dominican Republic, during the winter that it is necessary to pack along with your usual medications, some preventative ones. This would include things like alcohol-based hand sanitizers, sunscreen (with SPF of at least 15), sunglasses, insect-repellent spray, comfortable and cool clothing, boxes of condoms (just in case), your prescription glasses and other medical devices like a walker that you would usually use.

As for vaccinations, in addition to basic ones, like measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, polio, varicella (chicken pox) and your annual flu shot, there are other vaccines that could be helpful, if not necessary depending on where you are going. She suggested a hepatitis A vaccination for those who are traveling to tropical countries. But if your trip is to South America, Africa or Asia, a visit to a designated travel clinic at least six weeks prior to travelling would be necessary as this is not a service offered on Cree territory.

As this is a specialized field of medicine, a travel clinic is the best way to ensure that someone going abroad would have the appropriate vaccines and/or preventive medications for that specific region. They would also be able to provide tips for that region, such as appropriate clothing, insect repellants and bed nets to prevent malaria in areas where this is needed.

Dehghani's recommendation was to inquire with McGill's Tropical Medicine Clinic at the Montreal General Hospital (www.medicine.mcgill.ca/tropmed).

Happy trails!

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Better days ahead

by Xavier Kataquapit

Resource developers and First Nations are finding common ground when it comes to the creation of projects on traditional Native lands. The main ingredient to successful partnerships that benefit everybody seems to be respect.

I have watched First Nations all across Canada interact with resource developers and often there are problems. The main problems seem to stem from the lack of communication between all of the parties involved. When First Nations, resource developers and governments come together in respect for one another and with a will to share in resource development wealth, good things usually happen.

Everyone must remember that First Nations were very much left out of the loop on resource development for more than 100 years. Even though mining, forestry and hydro projects were being developed on traditional lands, Native people never benefited in a big way from these initiatives. For the most part, there were no jobs and few opportunities for First Nation people to receive any kind of financial benefit from huge multi-billion-dollar developments.

In the past, Native traditional lands have been negatively impacted by much of this development. This was disastrous in many cases for First Nation people still living off the land.

Over the past few decades, there have been more Native people accessing education at post-secondary levels. Today I see many Native executives, lawyers, consultants and academics successfully empowering our people. Over the past few decades I have also seen a new willingness by resource developers and governments to consult with First Nation people over initiatives on traditional lands.

It is relatively new to see First Nations partnering with resource developers and government on these projects. I find it exciting and very satisfying to see my people securing good jobs in mining, forestry and hydro development. I think that resource developers are also more sensitive about how they care for the land when creating projects because of First Nation involvement and concerns.

Recently, I reported on the signing of a Resource Development Agreement (RDA) between three Wabun Tribal Council First Nations, Wahgoshig First Nation and Gold Corp of Timmins, Ontario. These kinds of agreements are a positive sign that resource developers are consulting with First Nations in a more inclusive way. These developments have not happened overnight.

I know people like Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council, and his respective First Nation Chiefs have been negotiating for years to create templates for negotiations with resource developers that really work. Although it is a cliché, these negotiated agreements really are a win-win for everybody concerned. There is a lot of expertise needed to identify, initiate contact and negotiate with resource developers coming onto First Nation traditional lands. I find it exciting to see my own people succeeding at research, analysis and communications so that beneficial agreements are reached with resource developers and governments.

I know that so many First Nation Chiefs and Councillors are focused these days on making their communities more self-sufficient. I see evidence of this in many projects where Native people are finding training opportunities and employment in major projects. That means that my people can take care of themselves and provide for their families. They can have access to a lot of the same benefits that non-Native people have known through work for many decades. In general, our quality of life is slowly increasing but we still have a long way to go.

Thanks to leaders like Chief Walter Naveau of Mattagami First Nation, Chief Elenore Hendrix of Matachewan First Nation, Chief Murray Ray of Flying Post First Nation, Chief Dave Babin of Wahgoshig First Nation, and executive powerhouses like Shawn and Jason Batise of Wabun Tribal Council, a lot of First Nation people I know in northeastern Ontario are going to work and living better lives.

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On behalf of the Grand Council of the Crees and the Cree Nation Government, we wish to extend our warmest wishes to all Eeyou/Eenou and to our friends in the region and beyond for peace and joy this Christmas Holiday Season.

May the New Year be filled with health, happiness and prosperity.

May loving-kindness guide us during this season and always be in our hearts and our homes.

From our offices to your homes, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and may the New Year bring you joy and endow you with countless moments of happiness.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come
Deputy Grand Chief Rodney Mark

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